



## **Labor and Public Employees Committee**

Good afternoon Senator Kushner, Representative Sanchez, and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. My name is Jody Barr and I am the Executive Director of AFSCME Council 4. Council 4 represents 30,000 public and private employees covering almost all sectors of state and municipal workers. I am submitting testimony today in support of several bills.

### **SB 1177 An Act Concerning One Fair Wage – Support**

Council 4 represents Wage and Hour Enforcement Officers at the Department of Labor and we strongly support SB 1177 which would economically benefit 70,000 tipped workers in Connecticut, many of which are women and people of color. In investigations of over 9,000 restaurants, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) found that 84 percent of investigated restaurants were in violation of wage and hour laws, including nearly 1,200 violations of the requirement to bring tipped workers' wages up to the minimum wage. Our Wage and Hour Enforcement members recover vital funds for these restaurant workers when they are being paid below what they should be. It is also important to note that the subminimum wage will not increase this year when the minimum wage goes to \$15 per hour. It is time that these workers be paid appropriately and have the economic benefits of making a higher wage.

### **HB 6861 An Act Adopting the Recommendations fo the Task Force to Study the State Workforce and Retiring Employees – Support**

Council 4 supports HB 6861 which would address racial inequities in state government and protect employees from discriminatory practices. We want to thank the Task Force which worked on this study and the recommendations that this bill includes. This bill would protect state employees from retaliation if they file any complaints regarding discriminatory practices in the workplace. Employees deserve to feel safe and protected in the workplace if they see their supervisor or manager discriminating against other employees and want to come forward.

HB 6861 would also require the commissioner of each agency to do an analysis of employee retention rates which is critical data to address staffing. There is a staffing shortage across all state agencies that is only getting worse as the state finds savings due to attrition. This data would allow the general assembly to know what workers in state agencies are dealing with when they craft the biennium budget. We urge the committee to support HB 6861.

#### **HB 6860 An Act Extending Connecticut Premium Pay to Certain Essential Workers – Support**

Council 4 believes all workers who had to be on the frontlines and face to face with people during the pandemic deserve pandemic pay. This bill would expand it to 1c workers which allows for more workers who took risk the ability to be compensated. The only request is that this bill be amended to include municipal workers. Municipal workers provided frontline services to the public during the pandemic and only several municipalities have provided pandemic pay.

#### **SB 1180 An Act Concerning Rideshare and Delivery Driver Minimum Standards – Support**

All workers deserve the rights of better pay and transparency about how their pay is calculated. This extends especially to rideshare and delivery drivers who are promised worker autonomy but often are at the whims of companies like Uber and Lyft. SB 1180 reflects the priorities of Connecticut Drivers United which is a grassroots, driver-led organization. This legislation sets minimum pay standards and requires tech platforms to be transparent about what they are charging to riders and how they are paying drivers. Council 4 supports SB 1180.